

*BEST COPY*  
*AVAILABLE*

FEB 14 1963

Sanitized - Approved For Release

*He's a Coward, Thank God!*

# Doctors Laud Salinger In Canceling Press Hike

FOIAb3b

By Nate Haseltine  
Staff Reporter

Uninvolved heart specialists and very much involved reporters yesterday matched signs of relief when Pierre Salinger called off his 50-mile White House march.

The heart specialists were glad because the news might help end what they consider

a hiking version of Russian roulette; the reporters because they were committed to match the footsteps of the President's Press Secretary until he or they dropped.

A representative reaction of many of the 47 news reporters signed for the grind was that of Carleton Kent, of the Chicago Sun-Times.

"He's a coward, Thank God," Kent exclaimed.

To a cardiologist, however, Salinger's back-off was a real sign of common sense.

Dr. Howard Pierpont, heart surgeon and president of the Washington Heart Association, praised the cancelation of the march. "Newspapers," he said, should play up the foolishness of such stunts "which can do a great deal of harm" to the unconditioned.

Dr. Pierpont said hiking as a fad rather than a daily pursuit is as risky as the chances taken by week end athletes, the desk-bound who throw themselves wholeheartedly into active sports on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

The portly Salinger had never promised to go it all the way. And a 6-mile practice walk around Lake Barcroft last Sunday convinced him he'd best not even start the jaunt which had been scheduled for 7 a. m. Friday.

The fitness challenge was first made to Marines in 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt, who prescribed a 50-mile march in 20 hours with the last half mile at doubletime and the last 200 yards at a sprint. It was resurrected as something worthwhile by the Kennedy Administration.

"It may be all right for well-conditioned Marines," said Dr. Pierpont, "but even a forced march of four miles can put an awfully heavy strain on the unconditioned heart."

CPYRIGHT

CPYRIGHT